

T: Denotes a Certified staff member's answer
P: Denotes a Classified staff member's answer

Question 1

What is Graduation Matters Missoula?

T: Get more kids to graduate, get the community involved.
T: There has been more emphasis on high schools and Willard.
T: Emphasis on Attendance should start day one in kindergarten.
T: Community based graduation for all, achievement for all to reduce the dropout rate.
T: It is prevention based work.
T: Curriculum differentiation.
T: MBI
T: 21st Century
T: Getting students to want to stay in school
T: A community belief all kids can achieve
T: A forum that works into the district goals to ensure graduation.
P: A philosophy that the community has.
T: Starts with attendance in elementary.
T: Let students know they can achieve
P: A PR campaign should be given that all students can graduate.
T: Community and school initiative to support schools and decrease dropout.
T: Increase awareness of the importance of graduation.
T: Makes us think how to engage students and help keep them off the streets.
T: It is a powerful statement.
T: Initiative from schools and community to ensure graduation.
T: More than graduation, life tools.
T: Community probably does not know we have a fear we will lose Paras in the RTI program. Teachers will have to do more with less.
T: Want Saturday school back.
T: Initiative at the not so gentle urging of Dr. Apostle – graduation for all despite ability or circumstance, not new.
T: It has always mattered, one size fits all doesn't work.
P: Success for individuals is different, can even be finding a meal.
T: Differentiated instruction can really water down curriculum.
T: Core standards are raising the bar making it hard for students.
T: Building on that those standards are too hard and the kids feel bad about themselves, schools should not be penalized for dropouts or GED students.
P: The students use our services as best they can.
T: Lots of pressure on teachers
T: The message that is heard by teachers is pass all students.
T: GMM was designed to exclude teachers based on meeting times (during classroom hours)
T: Community thinks teachers don't do their jobs
T: The attendance policy needs teeth
T: Not all students will graduate due to their home lives.
T: Nobody has told staff what it is, I went on a website.

T: Not a lot of information has been given to teachers and it is not clearly defined.

T: Kids get socially promoted.

T: All the transitions are important.

P: Get 100% graduation, it is working.

T: Something that was created without Elementary input.

P: Two fold graduation is key for life.

T: Not much disseminated to the staff.

T: All research points to K-2 being the most important years.

T: Title 1 does not help in high school; it is baby sitting and needs to be in *all* elementary schools.

T: Confusing why it is all or nothing with resources (coaches, Title), not helpful.

T: GMM is for low income schools.

T: Initiative, state wide to reduce dropout s, increase graduation, and get community involvement.

P: A means to provide our students with a way to graduate.

T: Lower the dropout rate; increase the resources to increase graduation.

P: Create a positive image of graduation.

T: Marketing campaign to draw attention to the central goal: a brand.

P: Like a mission statement—a way to hook in the community, has gotten support.

P: Priority to ensure graduation.

T: Involves everybody (community/parents)

T: Building a partnership with parents to ensure high attendance.

T: Authentic learning.

T: Program to increase graduation with community support; moved to a state level.

T: Email said it was working.

T: We want to see if it is working; had to ask why students are dropping out.

T: The slogan sets a focus and is a goal that can be seen.

T: Anything to get them graduated.

T: Two fold, be aware of students who can fail, and do anything, even compromise standards.

T: Doing all we can to give them opportunity to succeed.

T: They have to pass; the community thinks we just graduate them.

T: Community thinks we can force them to work.

T: It is risky to put kids in online classes; they might have others do it for them.

T: We are worried about sanctions for dropouts.

T: Accountability; a push to do what we were already doing but giving us an ability to do things differently. (Online credit recovery)

T: Our credit recovery is way better, with more success.

T: Effort to address the national pressure to decrease dropout rate. There is concern it is more a public relations tactic than for the kids.

T: We are getting mixed messages about rigor vs. graduation rates.

P: Dropout prevention and 100% graduation.

T: Partnership with parents and community.

T: Trying to promote graduation with less focus on the negative.

T: More words than action so far.

P: To raise awareness of the dropout rate.

T: The principle players are the community.

Question 2

What are the short term goals of GMM for the 2011/2012 school year?

No one knew.

No one knew.

Attendance.

No answer

No information given to the school about them.

T: It is not a mantra we chant.

T: We need to support those teachers doing the work.

T: Education is more important than buzz words.

T: Expectations need to be high because some parents do not support education and parents make the big difference.

T: Attendance, Community Engagement, Student wellness.

No answer

No answer

No answer

T: Something about community involvement.

T: Attendance and community involvement.

No answer

No answer

No answer

T: Those are good words, but there is no teeth to the attendance policy and kids are learning this. When they come back from missing school they fall behind and need to be retaught wasting time.

Question 3

What do you think your role is with GMM?

T: Be helpful to staff, students and parents, to facilitate communication.

T: Let students know they are valued.

T: Be positive about writing admittance slips; help play the role of school nurse when she is not here.

T: Be a leader at school and in the community (SIT team, Parent Advisory Committee

P: Ensuring students have transportation.

T: Professional Development

T: MBI

T: Visit with preschools, home visits and getting families involved.

T: Provide a safe environment

T: Making sure families feel connected to the school.

T: Support the staff in what they do every day.

T: Celebrate the little success to link to graduation to make it look not so overwhelming.

T: Advocate for the student and do everything to help them with their fundamental needs.

T: The face of GMM for the school.

P: Making sure kids understand it is important to get the diploma.

T: To teach as effectively as possible and build a good relationship with parents.

T: Parent piece is huge.

P: Being positive with kids, have them own it.

T: Transition to 6th grade to give them skills to succeed.

T: Provide a safe and comfortable environment to empower a student, model lifelong learning.

T: Expose students to new opportunities, students computer password should be their graduation date.

T: Bring in HS and college students to come to our school.

T: Ensure good attendance.

P: Let them know we care; show them we like to be here so they will too.

P: Show kids we care and they can make a difference, some kids don't have support outside of school.

Teachers here help show students how to interact.

T: It is an offensive question, before GMM it was my job to know the strengths and weaknesses of my students to better help them.

P: Need more support for mental wellbeing.

T: We are the conduit with which helps the kids succeed.

P: It is a partnership between staff, community and parents.

T: Too many buzz words, ends up being teacher bashing; the propaganda machine hurts moral and we have *always* done a good job.

T: We do much more now with much less money

P: We have to make programs sustainable and applicable to students.

T: Working with students to instill positive habits.

T: Keep in contact with struggling students even when they leave to go to high school.

P: Make students feel like they belong.

P: Started with home visits building relationships, creating more positive interactions with parents.

T: Building systems to have positive non-punitive interactions.

P: Combating the culture that school does not matter.

P: Want to see it happen more at Elementary level. More accountability/teeth to truancy.

T: Community not allowing students to hang out at their businesses if they are skipping.

P: More summer activities.

T: Sooner academic accountability.

P: Help a struggling student.

T: We are the base of the house, we hold it up, but don't get seen.

T: Get them to bench mark.

T: Build relationships with students and parents.

T: We lack an attendance person anymore.

T: More FRC to help families.

T: We are the best school memories students have, we need more supports.

P: When kids understand, they enjoy working; in turn the opposite is true.

T: The kids are still here, but the resources are gone.

T: Aptitude tests for elementary are out dated.

T: If the academics are important, the students who were pushed will attend only.

T: We need a social preschool before kindergarten.

T: Teachers should be on the "panel of experts"

T: There is more diversity in a kindergarten classroom than any other grade.

T: Age has nothing to do with ability.

T: It is not new; I have been doing it for over eleven years. We track out students.

T: Just another term for instructing students how we have been for years. T: All stakeholders are involved.

T: We don't get together to waste time in meetings.

T: Increase engagement and differentiate engagement.

T: Work with parents.

T: Committees to focus on Elementary.

P: Encouragement, point out strong points.

T: Would like to see ways to brainstorm ideas for K-5.

P: More support for students (smaller class sizes)

T: Create an environment and curriculum that is relevant and opens them up to the world.

T: Get in tune with where students are emotionally/overall.

P: Advocate for the kids who don't see relevance in graduation due to their life circumstances. There are a lot of graduation requirements that are hard for them to achieve.

P: Parent involvement has been very difficult for at risk students and we lack the services to engage them. It is easier to engage these parents outside of the building.

T: To show students can do more than what they think they can do by pushing them.

T: To instill hope when none is there.

T: To help remove barriers the kids have set up and not take no for an answer.

T: Work with the students to find the best solution for keeping them in school.

T: There needs to be systematic change to help students.

T: Offering ways to meet credit requirements with alternate methods.

T: We are limited on what we can offer kids, set up a 7am-9pm learning center.

T: Take money away from sports and put it towards teachers. Let the community put sports on.

T: Help students become engaged.

T: Lifelong learners/readers.

T: Every student should be able to read for comprehension.

P: Assist teachers any way and building relationships.

T: Teach curriculum in an exciting way so kids want to come to school.

T: To encourage the kids and be positive.

T: To remind them how important it is, the more kids hear it the more they believe it.

T: Teach skills and develop relationships with kids and families.

T: Helping students see they are able and capable.

T: Being supportive of them.

T: We have kids make up their seat time for over ten days missed, and I analyze attendance.

T: Support the at-riskers, more attention, positive attention.

T: Connect on a daily basis. It has brought greater awareness to this.

T: More personally responsible for the kids, both good and bad.

T: We have to support the social/emotional.

T: Attendance problems equal at-risk students not graduating.

T: Coping mechanisms are unhealthy. There is no real medical/mental help in school.

P: Helping to involve students in activities.

T: Support what my staff is doing, making parents allies.

T: Support kids, parents, and other staff. Everybody has a place here.

T: We are the frontline; give them (the student) the opportunity to get the grade.

T: Keep creating a safe environment for kids, but we can do better.

T: We need more electives and a math program to meet students where they are at.

T: Student/parent advisory, open houses with food, parent teacher conferences, contract meetings with parents, the secretary calls parents about kids too.

T: Each student is talked about weekly.
 T: Homeroom teacher does parent contacts.
 T: It is hard to engage parents who had a negative experience in the past or are struggling to make rent/food.
 T: GMM needs to help teen mothers be successful and teach them how to parent.
 P: Encouraging students to make health choices, like how to have healthy sleep patterns.
 P: Mental health in the school is needed.
 P: We have problems with kids staying up until 4am gaming or on Facebook.
 T: Students do not get enough physical exercise education when we do not have a gym.
 T: More tobacco prevention is needed.
 P: Most of our students only eat here, the quality of food we offer needs to improve!

Question 4

What do you think staff's role should, or could be with GMM in the future?

T: More concrete plan for attendance, an effective district policy.
 T/P: need to be more flexible with high school schedules.
 T: Offering programs that make students want to be in school.
 T: Something other than a college path that should be equally attractive.
 P: Look at each school to cater to cultural needs
 T: Implement common core standards to all students for a strong foundation for college and career prep. Foster creative thinking.
 T: We are the bridge between school and home, improved FRC.
 T: Opening up the school to help build relationships.
 T: Teachers lost control with all 8th graders being promoted. Kids know this and quit working.
 T: There needs to be a change in retention vs. social promotion.
 T: Support to make it harder for students to fail, more flexible graduation schedule (3-5 year plans)
 T: Rapport is what connects students to school. Money plans a big role too.
 T: Tracking Ds and Fs and attendance.
 T: Identifying students with special needs and let the high schools know.
 T: More formalized communication with feeder schools.
 T: Transition years are where the focus needs to be.
 T: Teachers need to be involved in the discussion.
 T: All staff should be invited to be involved in all events to be included/feel wanted.
 T: Cross collaboration between schools (not just a Wiki)
 T: Enforcing intrinsic motivation for kids.
 P: Keep doing what we are doing, fine tune some.
 T: Forming positive habits for teachers, students and parents.
 T: Fix a problem when it comes up, not admire it.
 T: Get all kindergarten to read above grade level.
 T: We know all the kindergarten kids and kindergarten round up is an assessment time.
 P: The kids are happier when they succeed.
 T: Kindergarten is key.
 T: Communicating about students' needs that are being met and not met.
 T: Look at how each school is different.

P: Help guide students to activities that will get them involved, encourage them to explore.
 T&P: Looking at how to give back to the community starting early.
 P: Great to see female involvement in the science fair at Big Sky.
 T: Staff has always done what is right; we should have the resources available to have alternative paths.
 T: We make a difference in every students' life even if they drop out.
 T: We never get congratulated on what we have done right, only criticized for what is wrong.
 T: Come up with new ideas to reach our goal.
 P: Participate in that school community link.
 T: Diverse curriculum.
 T: We have been doing this all along, but do it with more intent.
 T: Expand on what we already have.
 P: Being community liaisons, opening up opportunities.
 T: Whatever it takes, all staff can help a kid be successful.
 T: Look at why attendance is not working, why parents are not involved and create solutions.
 T: More time to do one on one with students.
 T: Helping staff be more effective.
 T: K-12 counseling curriculum, get in the classroom more, have parent visits.
 T: Options for kids will change how to graduate. Career vs. college for instance.
 T: Adapt to fit the students' needs.
 T: GMM needs to use it's time more efficient.
 T: A tool is needed to evaluate what is working for those short term goals. Is GMM even measureable?
 T: New "marketing" to keep GMM fresh sounding.
 T: Studying the students who have the all warning signs of dropping out, but still graduate (find out why they were successful)
 T: More focus on reading.
 P: Homeroom teachers could focus on GMM goals with the students.
 T: A focus group like this should be done with students.

Question 5

Any additional thoughts or comments?

T: Feeling part of the school community is hard for at risk students, so building that community is important to reengage families.
 T: Be more flexible with Native families about attendance.
 T: Ways to address families who take their students out for month long activities (trips)
 T: An emphasis on how teachers need to see the importance of their own attendance.
 T: The energy put into GMM could be better used in the schools.
 T: More exposure to what GMM is doing.
 T: See that all the various groups in MCPS become more cohesive with each other.
 T: It has been high school first and not focusing on the elementary school; high school is too late.
 T: Close the gap between schools and family.
 T: As a parent, little information has been shared.
 T: Students' reports are not flattering, classes are too hard or too easy – no middle.
 T: A foundation for valuing education starts in K-5.
 T: More doing, less meetings, take a risk on action.
 T: Hesitant in using students as test subjects for new programs.

T: Fearful of more duties and extra in school committees that are not needed.

T: How can GMM support us?

T: How can transient families get support in the community? (mentor families)

T: More drug and alcohol prevention.

T: Who set the GMM goals?

T: Education is key to changing the world, if you fund school first, it costs less in the future.

T: Treat the whole child

T: Kids get lost in the numbers, more staff to support the kids.

P: Money needs to be invested in schools

T: Better budgeting with what money the district has, not sacrificing standards.

P: Change the credits to be successful, credit recovery is not enough.

T: School and community summer program to offer a fuller experience to lessen the regression.

P: Pair our summer lunch program with something academic and physical.

T: Community attendance program, no teeth to ours.

T: Ways to address cornice absence and tardies.

P: Attendance is based on how the family feels about school, how do we change negative attitudes?

T: Bus routes need to change to be closer to the school, kids who bus are here more often.

T: Common dismissal time.

T: Flagship is great, but not a fix all for all kids.

T: More nurse support, parents rely on the nurse because they cannot afford the doctor.

T: More information needs to be given to people about what GMM is, and what it is doing.

T: Seems like we are graduating kids without skills.

T: We need to prep students who are not college bound.

P: We support all the kids to make them believe in themselves.

T: GMM is high school, it needs to be at an elementary level. Transient families are the hardest to reach for education, each transfer of school loses 6 months of skills.

T: Kids have to want to work for you.

P: I reward students for helping me or just doing the right thing.

T: Summer and weekend programs are needed for the low skills students being promoted. It is hard on the teachers to see a kid go to high school when they are not prepared.

P: Parents have to be involved.

T: We need help finding real solutions to our specific problems, there is too much being thrown out.

P: We need more parent outreach to help parents appreciate education.

P: Lack of staff to adequately serve kids, but we keep trying and working.

T: Attendance policy does not need to be a punitive model. Help with why kids are absent, this used to be done.

P: System approaches need to more than in building and at specific school.

T: Committee members are not willing to go into classrooms and see what really happens.

T: We have to pick individual problems before the whole system.

T: Make a GED count for graduation or a transfer to Youth Challenge.

T: There is money for high achieving, how about money for relevant curriculum for low achieving students.

T: Therapeutic school.

T: We have not support for students failing science.

T: Counselors could not meet with students during CRTs.

T: Modify the credits.

T: Better outreach to the families for the at risk students (parenting classes).

T: Modify the system for students: change the learning environment, in house ALP because not everyone can do Willard, online learning in the school run by a teacher.

T: The relationship with kids is the key.

T: Adapting to the students' learning style—smaller learning communities.

T: 90 minutes is a long time for an ADHD student.

T: Later start times.

T: Learning outside of the classroom and getting *core credit* for it.

T: Guidelines on what we can do according to OPI.

T: need a program that supports students who have dropped and want to come back.

T: The change will happen when the block goes away, students need to meet each teacher every day.

T: Most of our dropouts are attendance and behavior issues kids.

T: Not all students can do homework, more in class work.

T: Get rid of Honors/AP, it lowers the bar for “regular” classes, but high achievers still need to be challenged.

T: Ways to build relationships with parents and make them sustainable.

T: The committee should explore what more creative options other districts are doing to be successful.

T: We like the two schedule idea.

T: Creating more connections with the community, we need to use them.

T: We need more student input from the low achieving students.

T: Getting students involved, engaged and opening the doors to showing what post high school opportunities there are.

T: Try to link students to the community.

P: Applying what kids are learning to the real world.

P: Link the community to the students.

P: Get more exposure to what high school is and what the curriculum is.

P: School needs to matter to the student before graduation can.

P: More focus on Elementary because it matters.

T: Parent education about what school is now.

T: School should not be used as a day care alternative for low SES families, they need more options.

T: Smaller class sizes in grades 3-5.

T: Part time paras are never the answer.

T: GMM should matter in every grade.

T: Big events for Kindergarten, not just Freshmen.

T: Personalize GMM for each school.

T: We try to share our ideas and are viewed as attacking the system.

T: Efforts should be put elsewhere instead of in meetings.

T: Better use of money to support teachers.

P: Books for the kindergarten, our PTA supplies them now.

T: Even opportunities by not limiting other schools.

P: Staff reduction hurts kids.

T: Rethink how we run our district.

T: Eliminate the teaching and learning department and let each building decide their own training.

T: Don't pull teachers out of the classroom to train them.

T: One shoe does not fit all; site based leadership.

P: Smaller class sizes.

P: Engage them now in 1 on 1.

T: Hopeful GMM will make a difference the more the community is involved the better it will be.

T: Start from the bottom up, not from the top down.

P: A Willard type commercial with other schools involved.

T: Make Willard bigger to help K-8, or a program like it.

P: I like the banners around town.

T: More exposure, the better.

T: More resources for parents who do not like school, to encourage kids to achieve more than what their parents did.

P: More opportunities to help parents learn the basic skills.

T: GMM is not a good assessment of how effective we are with kids.

T: A learning center would serve the needs of all ranges of students, from low to high.

T: We trap the high achieving students from graduating early.

T: Extra credits does not mean a more rigorous core.

T: Credit recovery is not the same as a regular class, it is watered down.

T: There should be different levels of diplomas for students. An AP student gets the same diploma as SPED and they are not equal.

T: I would like to see a better relationship with the Vo-Tech.

T: Our graduation rates have really not increased much because we have kept poor records up until recently. The drop outs are people to us, only numbers to the higher ups.

T: It is good to revisit these ideas, to see how we are doing, setting a solid foundation (reading comprehension).

T: Raise our expectations and our students will raise themselves to meet that goal. Lowering it lowers our students' goals.

T: With raised expectations the support needs to be there for it to work.

T: Raising the bar for everybody.

T: Where will the compensation come from when staff get asked to do more for no more pay?

T: Consistency across the district.

T: What are we doing to eliminate non-effective programs?

T: Getting teachers and staff trained in a timely manner.

T: Appropriate use of materials i.e. smart boards in room that need them vs. rooms that don't.

T: Transition between middle school and high school is confusing and freedom overload; more check-ins with freshmen.

T: Hellgate High School should become a freshman academy and then the other schools are three year high schools.

T: We need to prioritize the money for those who have the most contact time with kids (teachers and curriculum). Administration cuts instead of teacher cuts.

T: We want a say in what gets cut and we want to know who makes those choices now.

T: We are having to cut classes that the at-risk students like.

T: Money needs to be spent on lower achieving students, not top level i.e. IB, AP and Academy programs. Those programs take the good teachers away from the at-risk students.

T: Too much energy is spent on programs, not on teachers.

T: Too many initiatives to keep straight and there is not enough information ever given to us about them.

T: What we get to offer is not the same as what the bigger schools get to.

T: We don't get acknowledged for the good we do

T: Our student population goes up, our FTE goes down.

T: We can only help a select few students with our resources.

T: We need to make sure rigorous core applies to GMM.

T: Reassess how we count the dropout count. Some students are not cut out for high school.

T: We need a career center option.

T: Fine art credit is hard to get when we do not have FTE for the teacher.

T: Improve the attendance of K-2. Get students involved early, have punitive measure for parents that do not get their K-2 students to school. Success breeds success.

T: Bell curve should not be used to grade.

T: Target behaviors that need improvement, not the grade.

T: Routine is key, we do things an athletic coach training an athlete would never do; a large break (summer) with no practice.

T: We need to lower the student to counselor ratio from 400:1 to ASCA's recommended 250:1.

T: Give quarter credits to students who are at-risk (Juvenile Detention, Teen Recovery Center, and APHP).

T: Be flexible and encourage students to take an accelerated path if they can.

T: Collaborate with the University or College of Technology to get cheaper credits.

T: We need ways to hook students up with transitions into the work force or college.

T: Senior year should have an internship.

P: Use the community to engage the students to have a positive experience.

P: There is a hole when kids transition to middle school.

T: 8th graders who take and pass algebra in middle school should get credit for it, and sports should never be an excuse!